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Subject: Courtesy Copy: NEWS RELEASE: DNR Issues Special Fire Order Due To Ongoing Drought
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Oct. 14, 2024

Contact: DNR Office of Communications

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DNR Issues Special Fire Order Due To Ongoing Drought

***DNR Reinstates Burning Permits Beginning Oct. 15
In 13 Wisconsin Counties***

MADISON, Wis. – The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) today announced that due to prolonged [drought conditions](#) and potential for elevated fire danger throughout the fall, the agency is reinstating DNR burning permits by issuing a Special Fire Order in 13 Wisconsin counties.

The permit reinstatement will begin at 12:01 a.m. Tuesday, Oct. 15, 2024, in designated DNR protection areas until further notice.

The permit reinstatement applies to the following 13 designated DNR protection areas:

The permit reinstatement applies to the following 13 extensive DNR protection area counties outside incorporated cities and villages: all of Columbia, Crawford, Green Lake, Marquette, Portage, Richland, Sauk, Waupaca and Waushara counties and portions of Oconto, Dane, Grant and Iowa counties.

A DNR annual burning permit is now required for burning in a barrel, a debris pile and grass or wooded areas as outlined by the permit, unless the ground is completely snow-covered. Before burning in these areas, anyone wishing to burn must obtain a [DNR burn permit](#) and then visit [WisBURN](#) for the current burn restrictions.

Traditionally, DNR burn permits are required in extensive protection areas from Jan. 1 through May 31, anytime the ground is not snow-covered. Reinstating permits allows the DNR to restrict burning on a given day during times of elevated fire danger.

A DNR burn permit is not required for campfires intended for cooking or warming, but the public is reminded to use extreme caution. Consider having small campfires in a designated fire ring or device in the evening hours to avoid burning under elevated fire conditions, which are typically found during the day.

Current wildfire concerns are primarily due to the lack of precipitation across the entire state. Wisconsin has received record low rain in recent weeks, resulting in varying levels of moderate to severe drought. Wildfires that occur under these conditions can burn for great lengths of time and smolder underground for days and can be challenging to suppress.

The recent rain has not improved the overall drought. Ongoing dry conditions, coupled with the potential for increased fire danger in the fall due to dead leaves, pine needles and other dry vegetation on the ground, make debris burning especially risky. Debris burning continues to be the leading cause of wildfires in Wisconsin.

The DNR intends to keep the permit requirements in place until the drought situation improves significantly, either due to long-term rain or snow events. The DNR prescribed burn program will also pause activity this week due to the elevated fire weather conditions. The DNR will continue to evaluate as conditions change.

[Check current fire danger, wildfire reports and burning restrictions on the DNR website.](#)

